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WHAT THE CRICKETS SAID.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAR.

You would have come last night if you had known
How close I watched for you,
Out in the garden, where the moonlight shone,
Midst deepest evening blue.
The crickets' voices filled the air, I made
Words of them; these were they:
"He comes not! comes not! comes not!" so it
played;
"What keeps! keeps him away!"
We were so gay that night; the others came;
The hours wore winged feet;
Some gracious spirits tuned all hearts the same,
And yet 'twas incomplete,
Because you came not. Twice, when breezes blew
Leaf shadows o'er the door,
I fancied, out of hoping, it was you,
Your shadow at the door.
He sang, our Spaniard with the woman's smile,
Our sailor told his tale,
And in the spaces of the interwhile,
Sweet whispers did prevail;
The night burnt out as perfumed censers burn,
And all was at its best,
When drifts of dreamy chat came in their turn,
To follow song and jest.
And I took all my little rôle of mirth,
And played it fairly through;
Yet, when cold midnight crossed the quiet Earth,
And bade us say, "adieu,"
I from my pillow heard the crickets' cry,
And made it of once more;
"He came not! came not! came not!" just as it
Had made "comes not" before.

THE HIDDEN HAND.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE BRIDE OF AN EVENING," "THE DESERTED WIFE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE NOCTURNAL VISIT.

How is it with me when every sound appeals me?
"I hear a knocking!"
In the south entry! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!

Shrieking! Hark!—more knocking!



OLD HURRICANE AT THE SICK WOMAN'S BED.

ricane Hall only Major Warfield, Mrs. Condi-
ment his little old house-keeper, and Wool

Early in the evening the old hall was shut up
closely to keep out as much as possible the
sound of the storm that roared through the
mountain chasms, and cannonaded the walls of
the house as if determined to force an entrance.

As soon as she had seen that all was safe, Mrs.
Condit went to bed and went to sleep.

It was about ten o'clock that night, that Old
Hurricane, well wrapped up in his quilted flannel
dressing-gown, sat in his well padded easy chair
before a warm and bright fire, taking his com-
fort in his own most comfortable bed-room. This
was the hour of the coolest enjoyment to the
self-indulgent old Sybarite, who dearly loved his
own ease. And indeed every means and appli-
ance of bodily comfort was at hand. Strong
oaken shutters and thick heavy curtains at the
windows kept out every draft of air, and so dead-
ened the sound of the wind that its subdued
moaning was just sufficient to remind one of the
stormy weather without in contrast to the bright
warmth within. Old Hurricane, as I said, sat
well wrapped up in his wadded dressing-gown,
and reclining in his padded easy chair, with his
head thrown back and his feet upon the fire
irons, toasting his shins and sipping his punch.

On his right hand stood a little table with a
lighted candle, a stack of clay pipes, a jug of
punch, lemons, sugar, Holland gin, etc., while
on the hearth sat a kettle of boiling water to
help to replenish the jug if needful.

On his left hand stood his cozy bedstead with
its warm crimson curtains festooned back, re-
vealing the luxurious swell of the full feather
bed, and pillows with their snow whiteness and
lamb-wool blankets inviting repose. Between
this bedstead and the corner of the fire place
stood Old Hurricane's ancient body servant
Wool, engaged in warming a crimson cloth night
cap.

"Fools!" muttered Old Hurricane over his
punch—"jacks! they'll all get the pleurisy ex-
cept those that get drunk! Did they all go,
Wool?"

"Every man, woman and child, sir!—'cept 'tis
me and coachman, sir."

"More fools they! And I shouldn't wonder
if you, you old scarecrow, didn't want to go too!"

"No, Marse—"

"I know better, sir! don't contradict me!
Well, as soon as I'm in bed, and that won't be
long now, you may go!—so that you get back
in time to wait on me to-morrow morning!"

"Thanky, Marse."

"Hold your tongue! You are as big a fool as
the rest."

"I take this," said Old Hurricane, as he sipped
his punch and smacked his lips—"I take this to
be the very quintessence of human enjoyment—
sitting here in my soft, warm chair before the
fire, toasting my legs, sipping my punch, listen-
ing on the one hand to the storm without, and
glancing on the other hand at my comfortable
bed waiting there to receive my sleepy head.
If there is anything better than this in this
world, I wish somebody would let me know
it."

"It's all very comfortable indeed, Marse,"

The servant filled the warming-pan with glow-
ing embers, shut down the lid, and thrust it be-
hind the door.

The old man continued to
toast his feet, sip his punch, and smack his lips.

He finished his glass, set it down, and was just in
the act of drawing on his wadded night cap pre-
paratory to stepping into his well-warmed bed,
when he was suddenly startled by a loud ringing
of the hall door-bell.

"What the fool fend can that mean at this
time of night!" exclaimed Old Hurricane, drop-
ping his night-cap, and turning sharply around
towards Wool, who, warming-pan in hand, stood
staring with astonishment. "What does that
mean, I ask you?"

"Deed, I dunno, sar, less it's some benighted
traveler in search of shelter out'n de storm."

"Humph! and in search of supper, too, of
course, and everybody gone away or gone to
bed but you and me!"

At this moment the ringing was followed by a
loud knocking.

"Marse, don't less you and me listen to it,
and then we aint 'bliged to sturb ourselves wid
answering of it," suggested Wool.

"Sdeath, sir! do you think that I am going
to turn a deaf ear to a stranger that comes to
my house for shelter on such a night as this?
Go and answer the bell directly!"

"Yes, sar."

"But stop—look here, sirrah—mind I am not
to be disturbed. If it is a traveler, ask him in,
set refreshments before him, and show him to
bed. I'm not going to leave my warm room to
welcome anybody to-night, please the Lord.
Do you hear?"

"Yes, sar," said the darkey, retreating.

As Wool took a shaded taper and opened the
door leading from his master's chamber, the
wind was heard howling through the long pas-
sages ready to burst into the cozy bed-room.

"SHEET THE DOOR, YOU SCOUNDREL!" roared the
old man, folding the skirt of his warm dressing-
gown across his knees, and hovering closer to
the fire.

Wool quickly obeyed, and was heard retreat-
ing down the steps.

"Whew!" said the old man, spreading his
hands over the blaze with a look of comfortable
appreciation. "What would induce me to go
abroad on such a night as this? Wind blowing
fast from the north-west—snow falling
fast from the heavens, and rising just as fast
before the wind from the ground!—cold as Lap-
land, dark as Erebus! No telling the earth from
the sky. Whew!" and to comfort the cold
thought, Old Hurricane poured out another glass
of smoking punch, and began to sip it.

"How I thank the Lord that I am not a doc-
tor! If I were a doctor now, the sound of
that bell at this hour of night would frighten
me; I should think some old woman had
been taken with the pleurisy, and wanted
me to get up and go out in the storm, to turn
out of my warm bed to ride ten miles through
the snow to prescribe for her. A doctor never
can feel sure, even in the worst of weather, of
a good night's rest. But, thank heaven, I am
free from all such annoyances, and if I am sure
of anything in this world it is of my comfortable
chair and bed."

Old Hurricane, as he sipped

to the parson," said the old man, getting up and
moving towards his inviting couch.

"Sar! sar! stop, sar, if you please!" called
Wool, going after him.

"Why, what does the old fool mean," ex-
claimed Old Hurricane, angrily.

"Sar, de Reverend Mr. Parson Goodwin say
how he must see you yourself, personable,
alone!"

"See me, you villain! Didn't you tell him
that I had retired?"

"Yes, Marse, I tell him how you wer' gone to
bed and asleep more'n an hour ago, and he or-
dered me to come wake you up, and say how it
were a matter o' life and death!"

"Life and death? What have I to do with
life and death? I won't stir! If the parson
wants to see me, he will have to come up here
and see me in bed," exclaimed Old Hurricane,
sitting the action to the word, by jumping into
bed and drawing all the comforts and blankets
up around his head and shoulders.

"Mar! I fetch his reverence up, sar!"

"Yes, I wouldn't get up and go down to see—
Washington! SHEET THE DOOR, YOU RASCAL, OR I'll
throw the bootjack at your wooden head!"

Wool obeyed with alacrity, and in time to
escape the threatened missile.

After an absence of a few minutes he was
heard returning, attending upon the footsteps of
another. And the next minute he entered, usher-
ing in the Rev. Mr. Goodwin, the parish minister
of Bethlehem, St. Mary's.

"How do you do? How do you do? Glad to
see you, sir! I glad to see you, though obliged to
receive you in bed! Fact is, I caught a cold
with this severe change of weather, and took a
warm negus and went to bed to sweat it off!
You'll excuse me! Wool, draw that easy chair
up to my bedside for worthy Mr. Goodwin, and
bring him a glass of warm negus! It will do
him good after his cold ride!"

"I thank you, Major Warfield! I will take
the seat, but not the negus, if you please, to-
night."

"Not the negus! Oh, come now, you are
joking! Why, it will keep you from catching
cold, and be a most comfortable night-cap, dis-
posing you to sleep and sweat like a baby! Of
course you spend the night with us?"

"I thank you, no. I must take the road again
in a few minutes."

"Take the road again to-night! Why, man
alive, it is midnight, and the snow driving like
all Lapland!"

"Sir, I am sorry to refuse your proffered hos-
pitality, and leave your comfortable roof to-night,
and sorrier still to have to take you with me,"
said the pastor, gravely.

"Take ME with you! No, no, my good sir—
no, no, that is too good a joke—ha! ha!"

"Sir, I fear that you will find it a very serious
one!—Your servant told you that my errand
was one of imminent urgency!"

"Yes, something like life and death—"

"Exactly—down in the cabin near the PUNCH
BOWL, there is an old woman dying—"

"There—I know it! I was just saying there
might be an old woman dying! But, my dear
sir, what's that to me? What can I do?"

"Humming, sir, would prompt you?"

ask her to fill a large basket full of
a poor old dying woman might w
shall carry it!"

"Spare your pains, sir! The pa
already past all earthly, selfish want
asks your presence at her dying be
"But I can't go! I! the idea o
of my warm bed and exposing mys
storm this time of night!"

"Excuse me for insisting, sir;
official duty," said the parson, mil
"I'll—I'll throw up my comm
row!" growled the old man.

"To-morrow you may do that r
to-night, being still in the com
peace, you are bound to get up a
to this woman's bedside."

"And what the demon is want
"To receive her dying deposit
ven! was she murdered, then?
old man, in alarm, as he started
began to draw on his nether ga
"He composed—she was not
the pastor.

"Well, then, what is it?"
It must concern a crime!" ex
man, hastily drawing on his co
"It does concern a crime."

"What crime, for the love o
"I am not at liberty to tell
that."

"Wool, go down and rouse
him to put Parson Goodwin's
for the night. And tell him
draught-horses to the close o
both the front lanterns—for
dark, stormy road—SHEET
nal!—I beg your pardon, par
always leaves the door ajar
The good pastor bowed
major completed his toilet
vant returned and reported
It was dark as pitch, when
the hall-door out into the
which nothing could be seen
eyes of the carriage lanterns
but the dissatisfied whinny
the horses.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN.

No withered and so with
That look not like th
And yet are on!"

"To the Devil's Punch
given by Old Hurricane
minister into the carriage
he continued, addressi
think you had better re
church litany that pray
"battle, murder, and will
should be so lucky as to
and his gang, we shall
chance of being upset in
dreadful mountains."

"A pair of saddle-mu
safer conveyance, certai
Old Hurricane knew t
sensational, he was a br
rather risk his life in a
cold upon a sure-footed
Only by previous kn
could any one have to
went. Old Hurricane
knew that they droo
rough road leading
down that rugged fall
bank, and that then
a short bend, they
range of horse-shoe r
ricane Hall—thus, an
own road. Beneath
between it and ano
awful abyss or chasm
rocks opening as it w
earth, in the shape of
bottom of which, alm
depth, settled and b
of what seemed to be
ranean spring. The
called the Devil's Pu
Not far from the
and close behind the
stood an humble b
free negro, who pe
telling fortunes ad
Punch Bowl! Her
Winch's Hut—or O
tance from Hal's ca
sable, and the tru
by the coachman b
along on foot thi
against the buffe
faint light guided
The pastor al
mediately opene
the strange anow
to guess. The
a long, red, sh
battered a blue
black beaver ha
completed this
"Well, Hal, is
the pastor, as he
tride.

"You will see
The two
lighted, when
ward a